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## 'CHOP' WITH KING JA-JA.

RUMOURS of war came floating down the Bonny river to the traders at its mouth. The oil-canoes which came sluggishly alongside the towering black hulks brought whispers of solemn palavers and Egbo meetings in the recesses of the far river reaches; and the long black war-canoes of the Bonny chiefs, with their forty or fifty little black slave-boy rowers, were manœuvring every day with an amount of shrieking and yelling out of all proportion to the result attained. Will Braid and Yellow, two mighty black chiefs, were understood to be in open rebellion against their lawful sovereign, King Amachree of New Calabar. Forts of mud and wattles had been thrown up on the New Calabar river, and Gatling guns and other gruesome instruments had been mounted thereon, and the two recalcitrant niggers were having a high good time of it challenging the universe at large to mortal combat, and, what was of much more importance, stopping the all-dominating palm-oil trade on the New Calabar river. The puissant kingdom of Bonny, too, next door, was supposed to be mixed up in the quarrel, and was lending more or less overt assistance to the rebellious chiefs, and things were tending generally to one of those lingering, little, all-round wars which so delight the West African nigger, and so sorely afflict the unfortunate white or rather yellow traders who wear out their few years of life on hulks at the mouths of the fever-breeding oil-rivers.

At this juncture, the great king-maker, righter of wrongs, and arbitrator-in-chief, Her Majesty's Consul-general at Fernando Po, was invoked; and the result was the convocation of the greatest 'palaver' that had taken place for years, on board the big hulk *Adriatic* in the Bonny river. One by one the long war-canoes shot alongside, the glistening brown backs of the long line of rowers bending like one great machine to the rhythm of their shrill song, and the swish and dig of their paddles in the green water. One by one the gorgeous beings who sat on a raised platform

in the centre of each canoe emerged from under the great umbrellas that covered them, and took their places on the quarter-deck of the hulk. They were a motley lot to look upon, these owners of thousands of their fellow-men, many of them decked up for the occasion with gaudy, ill-fitting European garments, but mostly wearing bright plush waistcoats, high hats, and what is called a fathom of cloth round their loins, this fathom of cloth being two large-sized, brilliant-patterned cotton handkerchiefs joined together.

A table covered with the union-jack was placed upon the quarter-deck, under the penthouse roof of the hulk, at which sat the British consul in his war-paint, surely the best of good fellows and finest of officers. Poor fellow! He never wore his war-paint again, as the sequel will show. On each side of the consul sat a wandering M.P. and myself as visitors; and next to us, again, sat Captain Barrow, the secretary of the governor of the Gold Coast, who was down here to prepare for a Niger recruiting expedition; and Captain Von Donop of Her Majesty's ship *Decoy*, whose orders would not allow him to bring his ship into the pestilent river, but who came in himself, accompanied by two black Houssa troops. In a semicircle in front of us sat the Bonny chiefs; and similarly behind us were ranged the New Calabar chiefs, most of whom carried a large portion of their wealth round their necks in the form of enormous coral beads, of almost fabulous value, and some of whom had their arms literally covered with beautiful ivory bangles. In advance of the Bonny-men sat King George, a fine, tall, well-educated young negro, well known in London, and a very favourable specimen of his race, but an utter cipher in his so-called kingdom; a well-dressed and well-behaved enough young oil-merchant, but, from a regal point of view, a decided fraud, as his father was before him.

It had been proposed that the neighbouring King Ja-Ja of Opobó should act as arbitrator in the dispute, which was really between Bonny and New Calabar, the insurgent Will Braid and

Yellow being quite powerless to resist their sovereign without the Bonny-men's assistance; and across the thick yellow haze and sheets of falling rain, which blurred the endless vista of mangrove swamps, we all stretched our eyes to watch for the arrival of King Ja-Ja. But Ja-Ja had once, and not so long ago, been a Bonny chief himself; and after many years of fierce warfare with his great rival, the mighty Oko Jumbo, had slipped away one night in the dark with all his people, his wives, and his riches, and founded a kingdom for himself a few miles away on the Opobó river, where he had waxed rich and powerful; so the wily old Ja-Ja thought it wisest to avoid the reaches of the Bonny, even with the king-making consul as his friend, for who could tell whither the far-reaching vengeance of the dread Oko might extend? So Ja-Ja sent a very diplomatic message, saying he had mistaken the day, and hoped to see the consul next week to talk over the matter at Opobó.

The consul began by stating the case—that he could not allow trade to be stopped by this war, and severely took the Bonny-men to task for helping the rebels to withstand King Amachree, their lawful sovereign—and a great deal more to the same effect, which, being interpreted by the king of Bonny, produced a very depressing effect on gentlemen in front of us, and a most liberal display of ivories and broad smiles from the potentates in our rear. The Bonny-men were ill at ease, and many and many a time their opal eyeballs strained across the yellow mist and falling torrents as their king began, sadly and apologetically, albeit in good English, to reply to the consul's scolding; for the greatest of all Bonny-men, before whom King George is but a puppet—the overpowering Oko Jumbo—had not arrived, and the Bonny-men saw how hopeless was their case with the great white consul against them and their own champion absent.

But suddenly, as the king was speaking, came faintly at first, through the wet sickly air, the shrill song of the paddlers, and a cry went up from the Bonny-men, and many a dusky finger pointed to where Oko's canoe, with its sixty rowers and its ostrich feathers at the prow, came swiftly gliding over the waters. The king ceased speaking with a sigh of relief; and soon the master of Bonny stepped on the hulk's deck. A grand old pagan of the bygone school is Oko Jumbo, tall and strong, with a fine handsome face and powerful head, with very little attempt at European dress, or indeed dress of any sort, although his two sons, who reside mostly in England, are civilised gentlemen.\* Oko, in a few trenchant words, closed the business for the day. He would undertake to produce the two rebel chiefs on board the hulk on the next Thursday, if the white consul would guarantee the attendance of King Ja-Ja the arbitrator, all things in

the meantime to remain *in statu quo*. Of course everybody knew that one promise was as improbable of fulfilment as the other; but a palaver which comes to a definite conclusion at a first, second, or even third sitting would be against all precedent, so both sides were satisfied, and the high contending parties adjourned for refreshment, amidst much friendly snapping of fingers and other strange rites.

Early next morning, the little steam launch *Ewaffa* started from Bonny to convey the consul, his secretary, and myself to visit the domains of Ja-Ja. A broad river stretches on either side of us, the waters of which are thick and green with the rotting slime of myriads of fallen leaves. The banks are not of land, but a dense jungle of trees growing down into the water, and dropping long suckers from their outstretched arms to form fresh trees. The roots of this jungle intercept as in a net the mud and slime and vegetable débris brought down by the river, and in course of time the inner parts of the jungle become sufficiently solid to afford footing for crocodiles and hippopotami, but quite impenetrable to human beings, the outskirts of the jungle being always comparatively new trees, growing dense and rank in the water itself, and interlaced thickly with great, strong, green hanging creepers, upon which swing and chatter the mangrove monkeys. As we steam up the river and across its numerous branches, no sound but the shrill chirp of these monkeys breaks the oppressive stillness. Now and again the black snout of a hippopotamus shows out of the thick ooze on the banks, or a motionless crocodile is seen basking in the sun. Occasionally, a long, low canoe glides noiselessly by; the boat, rower, and paddles all jet black, and hardly visible against the dark-green background of impenetrable jungle. The air is soft and sickly, with a whiff now and then of unutterable nastiness. The great fierce sun casts a yellow, all-pervading, hazy glare on the thick water, which is covered with a festering scum of miasmatic air-bubbles.

After some monotonous hours of this unvarying prospect, with a rare glimpse of the far-away sea through some of the maze of creeks, we suddenly stick fast in the mud. Oh, those three hours! Our nude crew of fine stalwart Krooboys up to their waist in water pushing and tugging; the screw of the launch stirring up the horrors at the bottom, and the blistering sun on the fetid water, made up an ensemble I shall never forget. And so we dragged on all the weary day, now sticking fast, now going on a few miles, the consul's secretary already down with fever; past several batteries of Gatling guns mounted upon canoes moored across the mouths of creeks, and past the river and town of Andony, with its little mud battery and six-pounder Krupp guns, until, turning sharply the corner of an island of jungle, we find ourselves in the Opobó river, with the distant sea and the white men's hulks on the horizon. Soon we come to an inlet in the dense mass of verdure, and, passing the mournful wrecks of two hulks half submerged in the muddy ooze, we land, carried on the stalwart shoulders of our Krooboys to a little sandy gully, and are received by about three-quarters of the population of Ja-Ja's kingdom, with perhaps a dozen yards of clothing amongst the lot. Some

\* One of these sons died since this was written, and left an English wife and family.

old muzzle-loading guns, nine and eighteen pounders, of obsolete pattern, were scattered about, half buried in the deep white sand, unused and unusable. Inward, following the course of the gully, was what may be called the main street of the town, although no attempt was made at uniformity, the houses, such as they were, merely mud and palm-leaf huts, being scattered at random under and amidst the great palms and india-rubber trees. Followed at a respectful distance by the male portion of the crowd, the females being generally rather shy of white men, and apparently desirous of hiding behind tree trunks and peeping round at us from afar, we advanced up the gully to the interior of the town.

Ja-Ja is a most fanatical fetich-man, and signs of his paganism were to be seen at every few steps in the numerous ju-jus on our way. These ju-jus may, and do, assume any shape, and the most unlikely objects may be made sacred by their dedication, although no information is obtainable with regard to the exact rites practised or the supposed uses of the ju-jus. Idols in the usually accepted sense of the word they certainly are not, but rather things set apart for the worship of unseen spirits, or dedicated to the honour of a certain supposed god. A very common ju-ju, and, as it happened, the first one that met our eyes in Opopó, is a white hen cruelly nailed up alive to the top of a pole and left to starve and flutter to death. Then, in succession, we saw a grotesque human figure of yellow clay surmounted by an ox-skull, and covered with a penthouse roof of thatch; a miscellaneous collection of bones in a suspended grass cradle; a conical mound of yellow clay daubed and decorated with colour, and stuck all over with cocks' feathers; a Bass's beer-bottle on the top of a white pole; and so on *ad infinitum*. The great ju-ju house itself is much smaller than the celebrated building of human skulls at Bonny, and is a conical mud building with a high thatch roof, surmounted by an ox-skull, and lined with human skulls in the usual artistic, West African fashion.

Wading up to our ankles in mud through the rank dense vegetation, and passing a primitive forge, where four swart negroes were making nails on a stone anvil with a stone hammer, their forge bellows being two sheepskins worked alternately by a man with two short sticks, as if he were playing on a pair of kettledrums—such a bellows and forge, in fact, as you may see any day on the Egyptian hieroglyphics—we caught sight of King Ja-Ja coming to meet us. A brilliant-coloured umbrella was held over his head by an attendant, and, as usual with African chiefs, he was followed by quite a crowd of evil-looking rascallions of all ages and in all states of undress, carrying a perfect museum of obsolete arms, the staff of state, like a beadle's mace, and other paraphernalia. Ja-Ja is a fine-looking old savage, as black as polished ebony, with hair like silver, and was in full dress to receive us—a red flannel shirt, worn as usual with the tails loose, embroidered most elaborately with the imperial French arms, and plentifully besprinkled with *Ns* and *Es*, the Napoleonic bees, and other emblems of a bygone dynasty in France. This was the king's only garment, except the

usual bandana loincloth of two uncut handkerchiefs.

Ja-Ja received his great patron the consul with much finger-snapping and other signs of friendship, and led the way to his house. The outer wall of his compound, which incloses some three acres of ground, is formed by the huts of his slaves and people, the whole place reeking with filth beyond all European imagination. In the centre of the compound stands a fetich india-rubber tree, with a ju-ju hut under it; and near it is built the house inhabited by some of Ja-Ja's favourite wives; the palace itself being at the end of the compound, and over-looking all. It is a gaudily painted wooden building, raised on piles some eight feet high, and surrounded by a veranda. The house, a new one, is the pride of old Ja-Ja's heart, and was constructed by negro workmen from the British settlement at Accra. It is furnished with a desperate attempt at European style; but the whole effect is absurdly incongruous with the nude or semi-nude male and female servitors, and the evident uneasiness of Ja-Ja himself amongst his civilised surroundings. In the corner of the principal parlour, which leads straight from the veranda, is a most gorgeous red and gold throne, with a liberal allowance of crowns, sceptres, orbs, and 'King Ja-Jas' scattered on every coign of vantage; and on its topmost pinnacle is stuck jauntily an absurd conical hat like a fool's-cap, with enormous feather-like ears on each side of it, with which head-dress the king volunteered the statement that he had been 'making ju-ju'—whatever that might mean.

I was trying hard, but unsuccessfully, to make out Ja-Ja's extraordinary attempts at pigeon-English, when from the adjoining room came a female voice, which partly explained the attempts I had noticed at European furnishing.

'O yas, sah,' said the voice, with the comical affectation and bombastic intonation of the civilised nigger—'O yas, sah, I'se berry seedy, sah; I'se miscalkerlated de day, sah!' and thereupon Miss Sally Johnson—a Barbadian born, sah!—sailed into the room, positively dressed in a flowing cotton gown of most approved fashion; evidently a very superior person, looking down upon poor Ja-Ja and his people with much commiseration, and not a little contempt. This lady is prime-minister, secretary of state, and Ja-Ja's guide, philosopher, and friend in all that relates to the ways of the white man; and her experience and knowledge of all civilised matters are too great to be questioned within the realms of Opopó. Her initiative with regard to the gown, however, was not followed, for she was the only person dressed in the place, unless we so consider the eccentric harlequin suits of dye upon the children of all ages, and even upon Ja-Ja's marriageable daughters, who were plentifully scattered about the compound. The patterns stained upon the bright sleek brown skins are in some cases very elaborate and brilliant, and had really a pleasing effect.

Ja-Ja was rather overcome with the responsibility of entertaining the consul and his friend at so short a notice, and seemed so distressed that he had no civilised 'chop' to offer us, that we proposed to go on to the mouth of the river and dine with the white traders in

the hulks, and return on the morrow to a grand 'chop' or banquet at Ja-Ja's. So the old king brought out some calabashes of *mimbo* or palm-wine—which tastes like soap-suds and gin—and, what was more acceptable, a bottle of very drinkable Rudesheimer, and saw us down to our boat, followed by all his rabble rout of subjects.

The next morning, in a tropical downpour, we were received at Opobó with due honour. One of the rusty old guns had been turned right side uppermost, and was being banged away at a great rate, to the imminent risk of everybody within a hundred yards of it. Ja-Ja, with a largely reinforced guard of more truculent-looking ragamuffins than ever, awaited us on the beach. Tom-toms and horns vied in their din with the shrieks, yells, and howls with which the untutored subjects of Ja-Ja honoured their monarch's guests. In the principal room of the palace we found the table laid for our repast, and Miss Johnson was continually changing from the languid superfluous importance of the reception-room to the fierce invective and stern command of the kitchen, or back again, as circumstances required. It required several applications of severe corporal punishment to the wretched slaves—to judge from the howls we heard when any hitch occurred—before what is termed the 'chop' was served. Neither beef nor mutton can be reared on this pestilent coast, so the choice of viands is not large; but what was wanting in variety was made up in quantity. Kids stewed and roasted whole, great fish, and fowls enough for a ship's company, were served up, all in great clay bowls, and all made into 'palm-oil chop,' the prevailing dish of the coast. This is a sort of greasy curry, made with many spices and the finer parts of the palm-oil, very trying to European stomachs unaccustomed to such delicacies. *Mimbo*, again, was the principal drink, and Ja-Ja pledged us all in *mimbo* many a time and oft; but although I can stand palm-oil or *mimbo*, I cannot stand palm-oil and *mimbo*, so contented myself with a beverage at once less soap-suddy and less intoxicating. Ancient steel knives and forks were produced with an air of proud superiority by Miss Johnson for our use; but Ja-Ja, although he made a timid attempt to use them too, soon gave it up as a dangerous experiment, and took to his fingers with a sigh of relief, handing us out the titbits, moreover, by the same medium.

The redoubtable guard flocked round the veranda, and scrambled to every point where a view of our extraordinary proceedings could be gained, and an aggregate of acres of ivories saluted each movement of the wonderful white men who can do everything. Doors and windows were darkened by grinning happy brown faces, and the crowd of servitors within the room were envied mortals indeed. Ja-Ja himself was served by the heir-apparent or heir-presumptive of his swampy kingdom; but it is wonderful how little difference there is between heirs-apparent and common clay when there is no tailor to accentuate it. The consul seeing the king in so good a temper, broached the subject of a mission-school to be established at Opobó, which Ja-Ja had always refused; but on this occasion he not only promised to allow it, with effusion, but offered to build the house at his own expense. All being arranged about the next palaver at

Bonny, which Ja-Ja promised to attend personally or by proxy, we took our leave with many presents and words of good-will.

Of our tedious, sickly journey back to Bonny, I say nothing here, only that in it our brave, great-hearted consul, as true an Englishman as ever breathed, caught the deadly fever he had defied so long. The next morning, I found him yellow and delirious; and in three days he died, one more sacrifice of England's brightest and best to the insatiable fever-fiend of the West Coast.

## IN ALL SHADES.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

THAT same afternoon, Rosina Fleming met Isaac Pourtales, hanging about idly below the shrubbery, and waiting to talk with her, by appointment, about some important business she had to discuss with him of urgent necessity.

'Isaac, me fren,' Rosina began in her dawdling tone, as soon as they had interchanged the first endearments of negro lovers, 'I send for you to-day to ax you what all dis talk mean about de naygur risin'? I want to know when dem gwine to rise, an' what dem gwine to do when dem done gone risen?'

Isaac smiled a sardonic smile of superior intelligence. 'Missy Rosie, sweetheart,' he answered evasively, 'le-ady doan't understand dem ting same as men does. Dis is political business, I tell you. Le-ady doan't nebbber hab no call to go an' mix himself up along wit politic an' political business.'

'But I tellin' you, Isaac, what I want for to know is about de missy. Mistah Delgado, him tell me de odder ebenin', when de great an' terrible day come, de missy an' all gwine to be murdered. So I come for to ax you, me fren', what for dem want to go an' kill de poor little missy? Him doan't nebbber do no harm to nobody. Him is good little le-ady, kind little le-ady. Why for you doan't can keep him alive an' let him go witout hurtin' him, Isaac?'

Pourtales smiled again, this time a more diabolical and sinister smile, as though he were concealing something from Rosina. 'We doan't gwine to kill her,' he answered hastily, with that horrid light illumining once more his cold gray eyes. 'We gwine to keep de women alive, accordin' to de word ob de holy prophet: "Have dey not divided de prey? To ebberry man a damsel or two: to Sisera, a prey ob divers colours." What dat mean, de divers colours, Rosie? Dat no mean you an' de missy? Ha, ha, ha! you an' de missy!'

Rosina started back a little surprised at this naive personal effort of exegetical research. 'How dat, Isaac?' she screamed out angrily. 'You lub de missy! You doan't satisfied wit your fren' Rosie?'

Isaac laughed again. 'Ho, ho!' he said; 'dat make you jealous, Missy Rosie? Ha, ha, dat good now! Pretty little gal for true, de missy! You tink me gwine to kill him when him is so pretty?'

Rosina gazed at him open-eyed in blank astonishment. 'You doan't must kill him,' she answered stoutly. 'I lub de missy well meself



for true, Isaac. If you kill de missy, I doan't nebbber gwine to speak wit you no more. I gwine to tell de missy all about dis ting ob Delgado's, I tink, to-morrow.'

Isaac stared her hard in the face. 'You doan't dare, Rosie,' he said doggedly.

The girl trembled and shuddered slightly before his steady gaze. A negro, like an animal, can never bear to be stared at straight in the eyes. After a moment's restless shrinking, she withdrew her glance uneasily from his, but still muttered to herself slowly: 'I tell de missy—I tell de missy!'

'If you tell de missy,' Pourtalès answered with rough emphasis, seizing her by the shoulder with his savage grasp, 'you know what happen to you? Delgado send evil one an' duppy to creep ober you in de dead ob night, an' chatter obeah to you, an' tear de heart out ob you when you lyin' sleepin'. If you tell de missy, you know what happen to me? Dem will take me down to de big court-house in Wes'moreland village, sit on me so try me for rebel, cut me up into little pieces, burn me dead, an' throw de ashes for rubbish into de harbour. Den I come, when I is duppy, sit at de head ob your pillow ebberry ebenin', grin at you, make you scream an' cry an' wish yourself dead, till you dribben to throw yourself down de well, or poison yourself for fright wit berry ob manchineel bush!'

This short recital of penalties to come was simple and ludicrous enough in its own matter, but duly enforced by Isaac's horrid shrugs and hideous grimaces, as well as by the iron clutch with which he dug his firm-gripped fingers, nails and all, deep into her flesh, to emphasise his prediction, it affected the superstitious negro girl a thousand times more than the most deliberately awful civilised imprecation could possibly have done. 'You doan't would do dat, Isaac,' she cried all breathless, struggling in vain to free her arm from the fierce grip that held it resistlessly—'you doan't would do dat, me fren'. You doan't would come when you is duppy to haunt me an' to frighten me!'

'I would!' Isaac answered firmly, with close-pressed lips, inhuman mulatto-fashion (for when there is a demon in the mulatto nature, it is a demon more utterly diabolical than any known to either white men or black men: it combines the dispassionate intellectual power of the one with the low cunning and savage moral code of the other). 'I would hound you to deat', Rosie, an' kill you witout pity. For if you tell de missy about dis, dem will cut your fren' all up into little pieces, I tellin' you, le-ady.'

'Doan't call me le-ady,' Rosina said, melting at the formal address and seizing his hand penitently: 'call me Rosie, call me Rosie. O Isaac, I doan't will tell de missy, if you doan't like; but you promise me for true you nebbber gwine to take missy an' kill him.'

Isaac smiled again the sinister smile. 'I promise,' he said, with a curious emphasis; 'I doan't gwine to kill him, Rosie! When I take him, I no will kill him!'

Rosina hesitated a moment, then she asked shortly: 'What day you tink Delgado gwine at last to hab him risin'?'

The mulatto laughed a scornful little laugh of supreme mockery. 'Delgado's risin'!' he cried,

with a sneer—'Delgado's risin'! You tink, den, Rosie, dis is Delgado's risin'! You tink we gwine to risk our own life, black men an' brown men, so make Delgado de king ob Trinidad! Ha, ha, ha! dat is too good, now. No, no, me fren'; dis doan't at all Delgado's risin'! You tink we gwine to hand ober de whole island to a pack ob common contemptful naygur fellow! Ha, ha, ha! Le-ady doan't nebbber understand politic an' political business. Hê, Rosie, I tell you de trut'; when we kill de buckra clean out ob de island, I gwine meself to be de chief man in all Trinidad!' And as he spoke, he drew himself up proudly to his full height, and put one hand behind his back in his most distinguished and magnificent attitude.

Rosina looked up at him with profound admiration. 'You is clobber gentleman for certain, Isaac,' she cried in unfeigned reverence for his mental superiority. 'You let Delgado make de naygur rise; den, when dem done gone risin, you gwine to eat de chestnut yourself him pull out ob de fire witout burn your fingers!'

Isaac nodded sagaciously. 'Le-ady begin to understand politic a little,' he said condescendingly. 'Dat what for dem begin to ax dis time for de female suffrage.'

Grotesque, all of it, if you forget that each of these childish creatures is the possessor of a sharp cutlass and a pair of stout sinewy arms, as hard as iron, wherewith to wield it: terrible and horrible beyond belief if only you remember that one awful element of possible tragedy inclosed within it. The recklessness, the folly, the infantile misapprehension of mischievous children, incongruously combined with the strength, the passions, the firm purpose of fierce and powerful full-grown men. An infant Hercules, with super-added malevolence—the muscles of a gorilla with the brain of a cruel schoolboy—that is what the uneducated negro is in his worst and ugliest moments of vindictive anger.

'You doan't tell me yet,' Rosina said again, pouting, after a short pause, 'what day you gwine to begin your war ob de deliberance.'

Isaac pondered. If he told her the whole truth, she would probably reveal it. On the other hand, if he didn't mention Wednesday at all, she would probably hear some vague buzzing rumour about some Wednesday unfixed, from the other conspirators. So he temporised and conciliated. 'Well, Rosie,' he said in a hesitating voice, 'if I tell you de trut', you will not betray me?'—Rosie nodded.—'Den de great an' terrible day is comin' true on Wednesday week, Rosie!'

'Wednesday week,' Rosina echoed. 'Den, on Wednesday week, I gwine to make de missy go across to Mistah Hawtorn's!'

Isaac smiled. His precautions, then, had clearly not been unneeded. You can't trust le-ady with high political secrets. He smiled again, and muttered complacently: 'Quite right, quite right, Rosie.'

'When can I see you again, me darlin'?' Rosie inquired anxiously.

Isaac bethought him in haste of a capital scheme for removing Rosina to-morrow evening from the scene of operations. 'You can get away to-morrow!' he asked with a cunning leer. 'About eight o'clock at me house, Rosie?'

Rosie reflected a moment, and then nodded.

'Aunt Clemmy will do de missy hair,' she answered slowly. 'I come down at de time, Isaac.'

Isaac laughed again. 'Perhaps,' he said, 'I doan't can get away so early, me fren', from de political meetin'—dar is political meetin' to-morrow ebenin' down at Delgado's; but anyhow, you wait till ten o'clock. Sooner or later, I is sure to come dar.'

Rosina gave him her hand reluctantly, and glided away back to the house in a stealthy fashion. As soon as she was gone, Pourtales flung his head back in a wild paroxysm of savage laughter. 'Ho, ho, ho!' he cried. 'De missy, de missy! Ha, ha, I get Rosina out ob de road anyhow. Him doan't gwine to tell nuffin now, an' him clean off de scent ob de fun altogedder to-morrow ebenin'!'

#### STATION No. 4.

STANDING at the corner of two unimportant streets, in Philadelphia, U.S., and having no external features to distinguish it from the numberless stables and coach-houses in its vicinity, except the words 'Station No. 4' painted in large black letters on its gray door, its unpretentious exterior gives no hint of the marvels to be found within. Yet, for all its modesty and seeming indifference to appearances, Station No. 4 is no whit behind its more elaborate fellow-stations in matters of organisation and interior economy, down to the minutest details of drill and machinery; and the fine stalwart lads, whose acquaintance we are about to make, have shown their pluck and training in many of the most destructive fires which from time to time have ravaged the Quaker City.

As is usual in America, no order or official introduction is requisite to insure sightseers a welcome and the fullest explanation of everything of interest; nor is the application of the 'silver key' expected; while the mere fact that the visitor is a foreigner, and more especially if he prove to be an Englishman, is sufficient to secure him a hospitable reception and a more than ordinarily courteous escort. Our rap on the door-panel is instantly followed by the appearance of a sturdy, good-looking young fellow in a plain uniform of dark-blue cloth, under whose guidance we are soon deep in the mysteries of electric signalling, self-adjusting harness, and all the thousand-and-one ingenious contrivances for time-saving, which have long since made the American fire-brigades the most efficient in the world.

We find ourselves in a long narrow building, some forty or fifty feet in length, and ten or twelve in width. On one side is a staircase leading to the upper floors; on the other, a narrow gangway, kept clear of encumbrances, runs from end to end of the building. A wide doorway, like that of a coach-house, opens upon the main street; and at the farther end, facing the doorway, are three stalls, in each of which stands a horse, wearing a blind-halter, but otherwise unencumbered, and not attached in any

way to the stall. A single line of rails is laid in the floor from end to end, on which rest the wheels of the engine and hosecart; for, unlike our English machines, the engine does not carry either the hose itself or the men who work it, a separate two-wheeled vehicle, something of the build of a small wagonette, being employed for this purpose. This hosecart stands in front of the engine, and carries, besides the long coil of tube, all the appliances, such as axes, ropes, &c., which are likely to be needed at a fire; and a couple of the portable chemical engines, known as *Extincteurs*, packed away in boxes beneath the seats. Both engine and hosecart are furnished with large clear-toned bells, and it is the duty of one of the men to keep these bells ringing during the whole journey to a fire, as a warning to all other traffic to leave the car-tracks in the centre of the street clear for the passage of the engine. The clamour of these bells, as, in the dead of night, engine after engine rushes at full gallop through the streets, is one of the most impressive accompaniments of a great fire, and is a far more effectual means of clearing a crowded thoroughfare than the shouts of the firemen, so familiar to a Londoner's ears.

Having exhausted the hosecart, and shown how carefully all its equipments are packed so as to combine the minimum of space with the maximum of availability, our guide passes on to the engine itself, for which he seems to entertain as much affectionate pride as if it were a living pet. It stands immediately behind the hosecart, allowing a space of about three feet between the end of its pole and the back of the cart. The driving-seat is very high, and gives room for one man beside the driver, all the rest of the force having their allotted seats in the cart. The engine itself, a powerful steamer, is as handsome an object as bright paint and brilliantly polished metal can make it; and no one, judging from its spick-and-span appearance, would credit it with the yeoman service it has done in many a conflagration. Beneath the boiler, the fire is already laid, with wood soaked in coal-oil and a substratum of highly inflammable 'kindling,' ready to spring into a blaze on the smallest conceivable provocation. The boiler is connected by a tube with a large stationary boiler in the cellar beneath, and a constant supply of hot water passes from the latter to the former. This tube being automatically severed from the engine the instant an alarm is sounded, and the engine-fire kindled at the same moment, a sufficient pressure of steam for the pumps is generated long before the scene of the fire is reached, and so again valuable time is saved.

Our attention is next drawn to the harness, which is suspended from the ceiling exactly over the places occupied by the horses when attached to the engine and cart. Great ingenuity is displayed both in the construction of each part of the trappings and in the mathematical accuracy with which it adjusts itself to the exact spot of the horse's anatomy which it is intended to occupy. The collars are of iron, hinged at the topmost point, and having a clasp like that of a lady's bracelet to close them beneath the horse's neck. When hanging, they are open to

their full extent; and as they descend upon the horse, they close and snap by their own weight. The polechains are attached by spring snaps to the collars, and this is the only part of the harnessing which has to be done by hand after the alarm sounds. The entire harness for each vehicle is suspended by a single cord, which merely requires a touch of the driver's hand, when he reaches his seat, to adjust and liberate the whole.

Against the wall, close by the door, and well in view from the foot of the staircase, are a large gong, a clock, and a glass-covered dial, the last bearing the numbers which indicate all the sections into which the city is divided for the purposes of the brigade. At the further end of the building, as already mentioned, are the horses, clever, well-trained, serviceable-looking animals, of which our guide has much to say, his anecdotes and manner of speaking of them showing that they are as great favourites with the brigade as their engine itself. The big sturdy fellow on our right, as we stand facing them in their stalls, does duty between the shafts of the hosecart; the others, a well-matched pair so far as size and strength go, belonging to the engine.

As yet, our cicerone is the only member of the force whom we have seen, the rest being 'off duty,' and spending their leisure hours in the comfortable reading-room on the first floor. But now our guide disappears for a moment, and presently returns with an older man, whom he introduces as the superintendent of the station. The latter, after a few minutes' chat, in the course of which we manage to pay one or two well-merited compliments to the American system, volunteers to indulge us with a private view of the working of the station. Placing us so as to insure fair-play to the men and horses, and assuring us that no one in the building but ourselves is in the secret of his intention, he approaches the gong, and touches a spring which sets the electric current working. The transformation is instantaneous. The gong sounds sharply; the doors of the stalls fly open; a whiplash, suspended like the sword of Damocles over the hosecart horse's flanks, descends sharply, and sends him off down the narrow gangway at a swinging trot. His companions follow, and range themselves in place on either side of the engine-pole. The harness falls into place obedient to the touch of the driver, who, with the rest of the men, has glided from the floor above, and has already swung himself to his seat. Two others clasp the chains to the collars; and in another instant each stands ready to mount to his place in the cart the moment the word is given to start. Glancing at our watches, we see that the whole time since the first stroke of the gong is exactly *eight seconds*—an almost incredible illustration of what can be done by perfect organisation and careful drilling.

The private rehearsal being now at an end, the reverse process follows, with scarcely less despatch and mechanical regularity; and almost before we have realised the completeness of the preparations, the horses are once more in their stalls, the men have returned to their occupations above-stairs, and the usual orderly aspect of things is restored, *within one minute* from the

sounding of the alarm. The superintendent is well pleased with the admiration and applause his little performance elicits, and now proceeds to point out one or two minor details which had escaped our notice. He shows that the clock has stopped—registering the exact moment at which the call sounded—explains the machinery by which the electric current throws open the doors of the building and of the horses' stalls—points out how the precise locality of the fire is shown by the number of beats on the gong and by the numbered dial; how the tube which supplies hot water to the boiler has been closed and disconnected; and finally, conducting us upstairs to the dormitory, how the gas in the chandelier is turned on and ignited by an electric spark, so as to avoid delay in case of a night-alarm.

And so at length, rather exhausted by than having exhausted the wonders of the place, we bid our friendly guide 'good-day,' and once more find ourselves in the street. Station No. 4 has resumed its unpretentious aspect, and as we turn away, we can hardly credit that commonplace exterior with such marvellous contents. It is as if we had been admitted for a brief space to the Palace of Enchantments of some fairy tale or Arabian Nights' story, and it is difficult to realise that we have only been behind the scenes of one of the hardest-worked departments of a nineteenth-century police.

Each Company is responsible only for attendance upon calls within certain fixed limits, except in the case of a general call. But as every summons rings in every station, the organisation is kept in perfect order by the frequency of the alarms. In connection with the fire brigade there is also a Patrol or Salvage Corps, whose quarters are similarly equipped in all respects; while the arrangements for the comfort and recreation of the staff are rather better, and the number of hands employed considerably larger than in the individual stations. The importance of efficiency in both departments may be judged from the fact that, as our guide informed us, the calls to actual fires, upon Station No. 4, average about twenty per month during the long winter season.

## WHERE THE TRACKS LED TO.

### IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

THE very next day the office porter at Thurles & Company—I never heard who the 'Company' was—received orders to go to Bristol on some errand for the firm, and wait for a packet, which he was to bring back with him. Thurles & Company had two out-of-door porters or messengers; but this was the man who attended to the head-clerk's room, to the counting-house, and, of course, on Mr Thurles. He went, and I suppose his employers had written to the Bristol people asking them to keep the man down there for a while, as he was gone a very long time. In his absence, another person had to be appointed to perform his duties; and I may as well say at once that I was the temporary porter, and that the regular party had been purposely sent away to make room for me. Dressed in plain



brown livery, with brass buttons, wearing a false pair of whiskers—I shaved quite close in those days—with collar and tie as much unlike my usual style as could be, without anything like a caricature, I was not easily to be recognised, even if—as was hardly probable—some of the clerks had ever seen and known Sergeant Holdrey of the metropolitan police. There were not many clerks at Thurles & Company's, so on the first day of my taking office I knew them all.

My inexperience in my duties occasioned me, and others too, some inconvenience at first, and would have been much worse but for a little assistance I derived from a clerk who observed it—a young fellow named Picknell. I had noticed him when I first went in, and did not like his looks. He was short and thin, very dark-complexioned like a gipsy, with eyes that you couldn't fix, and couldn't say whether they were watching you or not; and I never could make up my mind from first to last as to whether he had or had not a cast in his eye. However, he took compassion on me, and told me several things which were useful, and from the first seemed to take an interest in me. Well, on this day I could do but little. I kept my eyes open; noticed the manner and style of the clerks, and of the porters as well. These latter had not been suspected; but they were none the less likely to have been in the job, and of course I noticed thoroughly the window and its position as regarded the safe.

Mr Thurles had said the robbery must have been committed by some one whose appearance was familiar to the people in the neighbourhood, as he would certainly be noticed; but after seeing the premises, I did not agree with him. The entry was made in just the way a regular 'tradesman' would have done it; but this was no guide, if the place had been prepared for him.

I went home to think over the matter and to decide what my first move should be. I was going round a crescent which lay in my road home, when I was startled by seeing two figures cross the farther end, and, as they passed under the light of a lamp, I could have sworn that one was my Winny; the other was a man I could not recognise. I laughed at the fancy, however, as it was impossible that my girl should be there; and I had turned down a street which led to my place, when, by a sudden change of mind, I turned sharply round and went in the direction where I had seen these persons. But just there the crescent joined a large and busy thoroughfare, in which it was easy to lose any one; at anyrate, I could see nothing of them, although I walked first on one side and then the other for several minutes. Once I thought I saw a couple resembling them enter a shop, and I hurried up, only to find, when close to them, that these were not in the least like the persons I thought I had seen.

This incident disturbed me more than I could account for, and do what I would, I could not help thinking of it all the way home; and as I put my key in the door, my heart fluttered in such a way as it had never done with more serious business. It was an immense relief to me to find Winny there and my tea waiting for me as usual.

'What has been troubling you, father?' she

said, as I took off my hat and coat. 'You look harassed.'

'Well, I am a little harassed, Winny. I don't like being taken from home again.' I had determined to say nothing about the crescent incident, of which I began to feel a trifle ashamed.

I made up my mind to have a nice enjoyable Christmas, for the business of Thurles & Company was not of the kind to demand my running about without rest, and, in honest truth, I did not see how I was to begin anywhere, so a day's consideration would not hurt it.

We had a quiet day enough. My wife's brother and his wife came to tea and supper; as also did Dick Berry, an old comrade—pensioned off like myself—and his wife. We had a cosy evening; but Winny and I had our dinner alone. When it was over and I got my pipe, I could not help thinking of very different times—when my poor wife was alive—always so cheerful!—when the two boys, who died with the scarlet fever, were still with us, and when Tom, my other boy, had not gone to Australia. While I was thinking like this, I caught Winny's eye fixed on my own, and I supposed something of the same train of fancy was in her mind, for she rose from her chair, threw her arms round my neck, and—to my alarm, as well as my surprise, for she was not a girl to give way—burst out sobbing.

I was upset for the moment; but rallying, I said: 'Come, Winny, my dear! We must keep up a better heart than this. I know you are thinking of the past; but I would rather you, with all your life before you, thought of the future.'

For the moment she was worse instead of better for this cheering up, and I really thought was going to be hysterical; but she rallied herself with a great effort, and after kissing me again and again, dried her eyes, and laughed at herself for being so foolish.

We had no fresh outbreak; but, for all that, I was glad when my friends dropped in and things became more generally cheerful. We had our usual chat, our game at cards; although Winny was a woman grown, she always looked for the 'speculation' at Christmas, just as she had done when a child. We had our songs too; but over these, I gave my old friend Dick, who was a beautiful singer—had been better, I know, but was capital still—a hint not to make the ballads too sentimental, consequently he left out *Isle of Beauty*, which was his great favourite, and worth walking a mile to listen to. So the evening passed off pretty well.

On the next day I was at Mr Thurles' office again. Being Boxing Day, there was only one clerk there. It was necessary, it appeared, to keep the office open; but no particular business was expected to be done. The clerk on duty was the young man Picknell. He was as pleasant as before, and quite disposed to make the time pass agreeably, so that the loss of my holiday should not be so bad after all. He sent out for a bottle of wine, as on such a day, he said, no one ever came after the morning; and being, it seemed, of an abstemious turn, he meant it all, or nearly all, for me. Now, that was kind of him; but, as it happens, I am abstemious also, and do not care for anything in that way until the evening. However, to show that I



appreciated his kindness, I drank a glass or two. Also—it was a waste of good liquor, I own—I threw a little under the grate while he was out of the room. I wanted to please him, and at the same time to keep my head clear.

To keep up the idea that I was enjoying myself, I allowed my tongue to run somewhat more than usual. He was by no means displeased at this, but rather encouraged it. I was at a loss how to introduce the robbery. I wanted to get at the gossip and opinion of the office on the subject; but it was a ticklish matter to begin upon, when the difficulty was solved by Mr Picknell mentioning it. Mr Thurles had told me that only a few of his people knew all the facts of the burglary; but if he thought such a thing was possible, I did not, and would have betted that every man in the concern knew quite as much about it as did his master.

‘Through the window under which you are sitting, David,’ said Mr Picknell—I was ‘David’ as the new porter—‘some thieves broke into the office a little time back. We had a most mysterious robbery here.’

‘Then that must have been what I heard two of the gentlemen talking about the other day,’ I answered. ‘Did you lose much, sir?’

‘I believe not a great deal,’ continued the clerk; ‘and why such expert burglars as these must have been, should not have arranged for a greater haul, no one can guess.’ He went on to tell me, very clearly, how all was supposed to have been done, and in telling me this, he mentioned Mr Godfrey’s name. He showed me where the young man sat, and explained his duties. He touched only slightly upon these things; yet it was quite clear from what he said that no one had such facilities for knowing what was in the safe as Mr Harleston, and no one could so easily have taken a cast of the keys. He did not say this right out, yet he contrived to impress it all upon me as clearly as though he had put it down in writing.

I was easily led, you may suppose, to talk upon this subject, and he led me on accordingly. But, of course, if you lead a man anywhere, you have to go first along the same path, hence, naturally, he had to dwell upon the matter just as much as I did. Having learned so much, I wanted to hear more about Mr Godfrey.

‘Why does not the young gentleman come here now?’ I asked. ‘I understood he was engaged in the office.’

‘So he was,’ returned the clerk with a queer smile; ‘but things are not pleasant just now.’

‘I should have thought Mr Thurles would have liked some confidential person in his establishment,’ I continued; ‘it would be very convenient.’

‘Perhaps he would,’ said Picknell, with another smile; ‘but sometimes confidential persons know too much, and then, you see’—He broke off here, but of course I understood his hint.

Well, the day wore away pleasantly, after a fashion, and I strove to see something like the ghost of a clue in what little I had already gathered. It certainly looked rather suspicious as against Mr Godfrey, and I resolved to pay some attention to him and his associates. And then there were other things to be thought of, because I am not one of those men who, having

taken up an idea, try to make everything fit in with that, instead of making my ideas fit the facts.

The first thing now to be done was to ascertain what expenses young Mr Godfrey was running into and what companions he mixed with. It was certain that it was not he who had paid in the forged bills; and as those were lost, a good deal of the regular way of proceeding was of no avail. Here, too, a hint or two from Mr Picknell came in useful. It appeared that the young fellow had a great taste for horseracing—or for betting on horseracing, which is not altogether the same thing. This was important, and so were several other scraps of information I picked up from the clerk.

In the little time that I was at home, I was sorry to see that Winnie was not yet her old self; and I determined that as soon as this business was over, winter-time though it might be, she should take a holiday, and we would go to some sheltered place on the south coast for a fortnight, as I feared she was working too hard.

I now learned that Mr Harleston was supposed to be entangled with some disreputable female acquaintance. Mr Picknell let this fall as though by accident. I did not greatly believe in the accidental character of the information, for I had soon decided that the clerk did not like Mr Harleston; nevertheless, such news was valuable, as my experience had long taught me that such an entanglement was enough to account for anything.

I had not seen Mr Godfrey. This was indispensable, so I resolved on a bold stroke, and determined to call at the house of Mrs Thurles with some excuse, to ask for him. Well dressed up, I thought I was safe; and luck befriended me. I had got up a clumsy story: it was to the effect that I heard they were taking on people at Thurles & Company, and I had been recommended to apply to him. It was absurd enough, I know, to go to a gentleman in the evening on such an errand; but in my case it did not matter, as the stroke of luck I referred to saved me all trouble. I was opposite the house, at the foot of the steps, turning over the beginning of the story in my mind for the last time, when the door opened and a servant looked out. Seeing me, by the light of the street-lamp, he beckoned and said: ‘Do you want to earn a shilling, my man?’ I said ‘Yes’ promptly enough, and went up the steps; while the man, turning to a gentleman whom I now saw in the hall, said: ‘Here is one who will go, Mr Godfrey.’ The very chance! A tall, fine, handsome young fellow, but without that air of resolution I like to see in a man’s eyes and mouth. ‘A good enough fellow you are,’ I thought; ‘but could easily be made a tool of by man or woman either.’

It appeared he had an appointment with a gentleman, but being detained at home, would be an hour behind time; and to send word to this effect was why he wanted a messenger. Mr Godfrey was man of business sufficient to make sure of my doing my errand properly, by adding a line to say I was to have a shilling on my giving the note in. He told me this with a smile. As nothing particular came of

the message, I will merely say that I delivered it promptly and got my money.

Now I had seen Mr Godfrey, I should not forget him easily. But what struck me as strange was the feeling that I had seen him before. Of course one may meet anybody, casually pass him in the street, and so forth, retaining a vague recollection of his features; but this was not altogether like that. I seemed to have some recent knowledge of him, but where, or how, I racked my brains in vain to find out.

My plan was to watch Mr Godfrey. I had learned, I considered, all I could at the office; the only thing to be done now was to find out more concerning his habits and associates; therefore I gave up the porter's livery next day. To do this was not difficult, as one of the outdoor men was ordered to take my duty until the return of the regular official.

I felt in duty bound to return Mr Picknell's liberality, and to ask him to have a glass with me at my expense; but I would not do this before the other clerks, as the young man might not like it; consequently, I waited until the men had left, and then, lingering outside for Mr Picknell, I intended to speak to him when a little way from the office. As I knew where he lived, I took up a position accordingly; but he turned in an unexpected direction, and went quickly away from me. This might easily happen from his having a special engagement; but there was something in the manner of his crossing the road, and then hurrying down a bystreet, which looked like a man endeavouring to escape notice; and I made up my mind to follow and watch, instead of speaking to him. It was not easy to keep him in sight, so quickly did he go, and so suddenly did he turn down unexpected streets, but I managed pretty well, until I found, much to my astonishment, that we were drawing near the neighbourhood in which I had earned my shilling on the previous evening, and, in fact, were close to the house of Mr Godfrey Harleston.

It was surely impossible that he could be going *there*; but he kept on until we were almost in the street, when he entered a low-looking public-house which stood in a mews close by. I waited, hidden in a neighbouring doorway, to see him come out. A long time passed; and as he did not appear, I began to grow uneasy. At last I went into the house, and found, to my disgust, that it opened on the other side into a bystreet near the mews, and by this way, no doubt, Mr Picknell had gone. This was surprise enough; but, to add to my astonishment, I saw, leaning against the bar, smoking, and with a half-emptied tumbler before him, Sam Braceby, the Long-necked Sam whom I had saved at the Old Bailey. I knew him at once, and the recognition was mutual. Sam had nothing to fear from me now, but I could tell that he was rather staggered by seeing me. Of course I could not consider him as being after any good, see him where I might, and he knew that as well as I did. He touched his cap, and asked to be allowed the pleasure of standing a glass. When I declined this, he said he had been to the West End on a profitable bit of business—indeed, he thought he was going to take a snug little beerhouse there, which a

friend had promised to put him into. I looked at him steadily while he said this, and smiled when he had finished. In spite of himself, Sam could not help smiling also, although he tried to disguise it by drinking some gin-and-water.

#### AN ANCIENT SPINNER.

In the 'good old days' before the invention of the spinning-jenny and the steam-engine, when working-men were slaves, and the rich had not the luxuries they have now, spinning was the work of the mistress of the house. Many good stories begin with an account of a fair maiden at a spinning-wheel, and a very ancient rhyme refers to the days 'when Adam delved and Eve span.' When a young lady was growing of a marriageable age, in the days of the spinning-wheel, she made preparation for her nuptials by spinning the material for sheets, tablecloths, napkins, and all manner of household necessities; hence she was called a 'spinster.'

Words change in their meanings with the changing fashions of a changeful world. There is one class of spinners, however, to which the whir of the loom and the steam-engine has made but little difference. 'Men may come, and men may go, but *they* go on for ever.' All the changes of our complex civilisation make but little difference to these little spinners. They live in their dark little houses; spin their threads; live their lives; die in peace, or else get eaten up, and pass off the scene, making no fuss, seeking no honour. Some people call them mussels; scientific naturalists call them *Mytilus edulis*. They deserve a good name, for they are an ancient and honourable family, that have fought a good fight in the fierce battle of life, and have endured through long ages, while many others have perished.

Every one who has visited the seashore must have noticed at times a little mussel forming the centre of a tangled mass of threads, shells, stones, and all sorts of fragments. These are bound together by the labour of the black-shelled spinster. Instead of anchoring to a rock, as a well-behaved little mussel ought to have done, this one has gone off and anchored to all sorts of rubbish, and been driven and tossed by the waves of the sea in all directions, until it has formed the centre of the tangled mass we find on the beach. In the natural way, a mussel settles between high and low water mark. When covered by the tide, he opens his doors, and angles for a living with his wonderful fishing-apparatus, for the spinsters of the sea are all born fishermen. When the tide is going out, the little angler closes the valves of his house as tight as a steel safe, and keeps his mouth shut, with a lot of water inside, until the tide covers him again.

How the Frenchmen have learned the habits of this well-known little spinner, and cultivated him, and made of him a cheap and nutritious article of diet for the French nation, is fairly well known. How the little fellow builds his house and weaves his ropes, is not quite so well known. The house itself, with its black outside, and the beautiful sky-blue, pearly inside, is a work of the greatest skill, while the mechanism by which it is opened and closed forms a chapter

in the world's wonder-lore. The little spinner lives in a soft, fleshy 'mantle,' inside of his stony house. On the edge of this mantle are tiny fingers (*cilia*) and little pigment cells with which he builds. The material—carbonate of lime—is extracted from the clear sea-water by a simple process in the life of the animal. Just as our food goes to form blood and bone, muscle and sinew, so does the food of the little spinner go to form his delicate tissues and his hard shelly house. The mussel-house is as much a part of the mussel's life as our homes are part of our lives, and the processes of building are not so very different either; both are simple, both are mysterious.

To watch this little spinner make his thread is very interesting. From one side of his house protrudes a curious little pad of flesh, a quaint, pointed sort of a tab. This is called his 'foot,' though it might just as well have been called his hand. He touches the rock, or whatever he desires to attach himself to, with this foot, then withdraws it, leaving a tiny thread, which he has made by some mystic process, in his own body, just as a spider makes her silken cord. The foot comes out again and again, always leaving a thread, until a strong rope is woven, which binds him securely to his chosen home. He can shorten or lengthen this cable by a simple contractile motion, which allows him a little play; but he may be said to be fixed for life, once he settles down. After a severe storm, some of them will generally be found on the shore, driven from their moorings, helpless and homeless on the strand; but they can stand the storm as well as the ships of more skilful people, and their disasters at sea are probably less numerous in proportion than ours are.

I had one little fellow in an aquarium, who had been gathered from a spot where the tide left him for a long period every day. He did not care to be under water all the time, so, by the aid of his foot and his wonderful home-made thread, he climbed up the glass to the surface of the water. There he attached some threads above water to the glass, leaving some below. When the little spinner felt like having a breath of fresh air, he 'hailed in' on his upper guys, and rose above the surface. When tired of that, he 'slacked off,' and took a turn underneath, thus making something like his accustomed tidal habit.

Watching these little animals in their daily movements, one grows to have a fellow-feeling for them. Some of their actions seem almost human, and they form a part of the household, just as the cat, the dog, or the canary. One day a conscienceless sea-pirate known as a dog-whelk settled on this little spinner, and began to bore through his shell with murderous intent. The whelk was taken off, and removed to another part of the aquarium. On the morrow, he had found his way back and settled down again on the innocent little victim, so he was sentenced to death as a murderer, and paid the penalty with his life.

This mussel has inherited the spinning business from a long line of ancestors; for when the coal-forests bloomed where the iron furnaces now roar, in the 'Black Country' of England, the forefathers of our little spinner were inhabitants

of the fresh-water pools in the carboniferous forests. Ages have come and gone since then; the stony remainders of the ancient spinners are dug from out the deepest coal-mines, but the clever little fellows still spin their simple threads along our shores as of old. We sometimes weave their threads into gloves and hose, as a matter of curiosity; but few ever seem to have time to listen to the wonderful story that can be told to listening ears by this Ancient Spinner.

## AN ESCORT ADVENTURE.

'SERGEANT, you have been detailed to proceed on escort with the prisoner Scales. I would advise you to keep a sharp eye upon him. He is a desperate character, and if he gets half a chance, will endeavour to give you the slip,' remarked our adjutant to me.

'Very good, sir,' I replied.

'Here is your paper,' said the officer, as he handed me the warrant which bound me, under severe penalties for non-fulfilment of its provisions, to take private Jeremiah Scales 'dead or alive' to the district military prison.

I saluted the adjutant, and was turning to leave, when the colonel entered the orderly-room.

'Good-morning, colonel,' said the adjutant.

'This sergeant is going on Scales's escort, and I was just warning him to take great care of the rascal.'

'Confound the fellow!' grumbled the colonel. 'After all, it seems the scoundrel is coming back to me. The court-martial that tried him—very properly, considering his antecedents—sentenced him to be discharged on the expiry of his term of imprisonment; and now the general, presumably acting on superior instructions, remits the only part of the punishment that is likely to benefit the service. During my twenty years' experience, I have always found it the same in the army. Last spring, for instance, during the wholesale reduction that took place, we had, perforce, to send away a number of good men, infinitely better than this blackguard. Now, the Franco-Prussian business comes on the boards, and the authorities at the Horse Guards are moving creation to obtain recruits in order to get the regiments up to full strength. Every broken-down scarecrow in the kingdom is being enlisted, at least if I may judge from the precious specimens sent up to me. Besides, the recommendations of courts-martial with regard to the discharge with ignominy of the scum of the army are not being given effect to, and the rascals are allowed to remain in the service.—Yes, sergeant,' resumed the commanding officer, addressing me, 'you've got a cut-throat incorrigible blackguard to deal with; and if you don't look out, he'll give you some trouble.'

I then saluted the officers, and leaving the orderly-room, retired to my quarters to make a few preparations for my journey, which was a tramp of about eight miles along the seacoast. These finished, I proceeded to the room of the private who was detailed to accompany me, in order to have a consultation with him on the subject. This man, a Welshman, named Williams, was a veteran whose period of service had almost expired. He was, speaking literally, the 'hero



of a hundred fights; his experience of active service beginning while a boy in the second Sikh war. He subsequently was engaged in Kaffirland, the Crimea, and in India during the suppression of the Mutiny, finishing with the Abyssinian expedition, which took place two years prior to the time of which I write.

I narrated to Williams the remarks of the colonel and the adjutant regarding our prisoner; but the veteran affected to treat the matter very lightly. 'I've had tougher jobs than this in my time, sergeant,' he said; and then added significantly, pointing to his Snider: 'Just let him try to bolt, and my word, he won't get very far!'

The prisoner, Scales, was a repulsive-looking fellow of about twenty-five. He was more a lithe and active than a powerful man, but was nevertheless, by reason of his brutal and vindictive disposition, the terror of all the peaceably disposed men of the corps. He had served in the army for about three years, during which period he was always in trouble. On the return of the regiment from abroad, he came to us from the dépôt with an extremely bad character; and this evil reputation he afterwards consistently maintained. At the reduction of the army referred to in the colonel's remarks, the services of Mr Scales would to a certainty have been dispensed with had he not at the time been a deserter. Being apprehended and brought back to the corps at the beginning of the scare occasioned by the disturbed relations of Prussia and France, he received two months' imprisonment, and was sent to his duty. Three days after his release, an officer's room was broken into and all his valuables abstracted; and in this business it was supposed Scales was implicated conjointly with a comrade of equally bad repute. This private deserted with the booty, and Scales was apprehended on suspicion and handed over to the civil authorities; but he was liberated owing to no sufficient evidence being forthcoming to warrant his being sent to trial on the charge. His next feat was striking a non-commissioned officer, and for this offence he was now sentenced to nine months' imprisonment; the further recommendation by the court-martial for his dismissal from the service with ignominy being remitted by the general commanding the district.

No wonder that our worthy colonel was indignant at the prospect of having such a character sent back to the regiment! Blackguards of his description, in regard to the relations of soldiers with civilians, invariably bring the regiments which have the misfortune to own them into general discredit. The great majority of soldiers are respectable and well-conducted men, and to such it is very galling and annoying to be subjected to a social ostracism as rigid, in some cases, as that experienced by a time-expired convict, because of the excesses committed by a disreputable minority of their number; the civil community being addicted to the belief that all who wear the red coat are bad alike. It is to be regretted that the commanding officer of a regiment has not the power of summarily dispensing with the services of an incorrigible ruffian by having him kicked out of the barrack gate.

In the afternoon, Williams and I, equipped

in marching order, and provided each with ten rounds of ammunition and a day's rations, made our appearance at the regimental guardroom. The sergeant of the guard gave me a word of caution, and informed me that Scales had been boasting to the men that he meant to make his escape.

Our man received us with a stolid look, and mechanically held out his wrists for the reception of the handcuffs; and after a word of farewell to the other prisoners, he took his place beside the private, who had his bayonet fixed. I then marched them out of barracks into the principal street of the town. Perceiving a man of my own regiment who was engaged on garrison police duty, I asked him to accompany us to the outskirts, in case the prisoner took a fancy to bolt down one of the numerous tortuous alleys that led to the wharfs near the pier. Having reached the limits of his beat, the private returned, and I was congratulating myself on having nearly reached the open country, in which Scales would run a poor chance of escaping from our custody, when we were met by a large drove of oxen. In spite of the exertions of the drovers, the cattle passed on either side of us, and Scales, handcuffed though he was, watching his opportunity, suddenly sprang aside, and dodging among the animals, gained the footpath, and ran townwards with the fleetness of a hare. Disengaging ourselves as quickly as possible from the cattle, we started in pursuit; but as we were encumbered with our rifles and knapsacks, we made but little headway, only managing to keep the fugitive in sight. We shouted to a few rustics to intercept him; but the yokels perceiving that it was only a soldier running away from an escort, greeted him instead with cries of encouragement. Suddenly, to my delight, a policeman appeared ahead, who spread out his arms and tried to catch the runaway; but Scales, dropping his head, butted him like a ram, and knocking over the guardian of the peace, turned to his right, and disappeared down a lane a little distance ahead. This lane led into a yard, which was situated at the back of a row of warehouses, and which was a *cul de sac*. Reinforced by the policeman, we followed close on the heels of the fugitive, feeling certain that as there were no means of exit, we would speedily capture him. Meeting at the entrance to the yard a drayman with his vehicle loaded with barrels, we eagerly asked him if he had seen a soldier.

'Yes,' the fellow replied with a grin; 'I guess you will find him in the farthest cellar.'

We hastened in the direction indicated, but found, to our dismay, that the cellar door was securely padlocked, while the rusty condition of the hasp showed that it could not recently have been opened. The high wall that bounded the other side of the yard precluded the idea of the prisoner being able to scale it; so we stood for a moment, out of breath with excitement and our recent chase, perfectly perplexed with Scales's unaccountable disappearance. Williams at this juncture began ominously to untie his packet of cartridges, and placed them loose in his ball-bag ready for use, in the eventuality of the fugitive, should we come across him, declining to surrender when ordered. Knowing the determined character of my comrade, I knew that Scales's life,

if he proved obdurate, would not be worth a pin's fee. (In the days of the muzzle-loader, it was customary, I may mention, to carry loaded rifles while escorting prisoners; but since the introduction of the breech-loader, the practice has been discontinued.)

We searched the yard thoroughly, but found no signs of our man. All the cellar doors, like the first we examined, were closed. The warehouses referred to were principally used for the storage of grain; but owing to the war in progress, trade was interrupted with the Prussian towns in the Baltic, and little business being transacted, the buildings had in consequence been shut up. At last a light seemed to break upon the policeman, who exclaimed: 'I'm blessed, sergeant, if I don't think the cove wasn't stowed in one of the drayman's barrels!'

This idea seemed to explain Scales's mysterious disappearance; so we started in the direction of the main road, and turning towards the town, found the drayman unloading barrels at the door of a public-house. The man, with volleys of the choicest Billingsgate, stoutly denied that he had afforded shelter to the fugitive; so, perceiving that it was useless wasting words on him, we again pursued our search, scarcely knowing in which direction to turn. Pursuant to my request, the constable proceeded to the police office to report the matter, in order to have the other members of the force put on the alert.

I was now in a terrible quandary. Trial by court-martial and reduction to the ranks, together with a possible sentence of imprisonment, for allowing the man to escape, stared me in the face; while imprisonment for Williams was a certainty. My chances of advancement in the service would be absolutely ruined, I reflected, if I did not recapture the man, so I resolved, when I had so much at stake, to continue the search, although I looked for him all night. It was no use hunting for Scales in the principal streets of the town, as these were patrolled by military police, intent on apprehending soldiers who showed the slightest symptom of having had an extra allowance of liquor; besides being ruthlessly down on delinquents who had a tunic button undone, or the chin strap not adjusted in the regulation position.

While I was mentally shaping out a course of action, my companion stopped and excitedly exclaimed: 'I have it now, sergeant! I'll bet ten to one he's gone to old Nathan's!'

'I'm not sure of that,' I remarked dubiously; 'but at all events we'll go and see.'

Nathan was a rascally old Jew, who, though he was rigorously kept out of barracks, carried on with the soldiers a brisk business in the sale of coarse, rank, contraband tobacco. He had 'agents' in the different regiments to further this branch of commerce; and one of his accredited representatives in ours was private Scales. Besides, the old rascal, although it had never been brought home to him, was suspected of purchasing articles of 'kit' from ne'er-do-wells, and supplying ragged plain clothes to deserters in exchange for their uniforms. We lost no time in making our way to the squalid alley in the slums near the harbour where the business establishment of Mr Nathan was located; and when we reached the Jew's dirty little huckster's shop,

we found him weighing out a small quantity of a condiment resembling toffee to a couple of grimy children. Pausing until the juvenile customers had left the shop, I asked Nathan whether that afternoon he had received a visit from Mr Scales.

'No, sergeant; no soldier hash been here,' replied the Jew, who then continued in an undertone: 'Can I do bishness wit you in some goot tobacco?'

I paid no heed to the old Israelite's statement, and decided to inspect the premises myself, without any scruples as to the legality of that course of action. Placing Williams at the door with instructions to allow no one to pass in or out, I proceeded, in spite of the expostulations of Nathan and his threats to call the police, to carefully search the little back-room behind the shop. No one was there; so I ascended a rickety staircase, and finding the door at the top locked, I kicked it open; but the foul-smelling apartment into which the door led was plunged in utter darkness. Returning to the shop, I helped myself *sans cérémonie* to one of a bunch of candles, and lighting it, returned to the upper room, which, on examination, proved to be a storehouse for the rags and bones in which the Jew dealt largely. I opened the shutters of the dirt-incrusted diamond-paned window, and probed with my gun-barrel every heap of rags; but, to my disappointment, the fugitive was not concealed in them. Suddenly, I perceived some glittering particles on the floor, which, on stooping to examine, I found to be bright iron filings! I was now filled with a feeling of exultation. Scales had apparently been to the Jew's, and thus relieved of his handcuffs.

I once more examined the room. The window was apparently a fixture, and no one could make his exit without removing the sash. I next surveyed the roof, and perceived a trap-door giving access to the attics just large enough to allow a man to enter it. 'My man is there right enough,' I exclaimed to myself in great glee. I then shouted through the aperture: 'I know you are there, Scales; it will be better for you if you come down at once.' There was no response; so I decided to have the region explored. I called to Williams to keep a lookout for a policeman, and almost immediately my comrade shouted to me that he had secured the services of a constable. I thereupon summoned Williams to my assistance, leaving the Jew in charge of the policeman. Placing the rickety table under the trap, Williams speedily crawled through and gained the attic. Knowing the desperate character we had to deal with, I considered it expedient that my comrade should be prepared for an encounter; so I unfixed his bayonet, and handed it to him together with the lighted candle. Crawling over the creaking joists in the direction of the gable in which the window was fixed, Williams made a careful examination of the interior, while in the room below I waited with breathless excitement.

'Anybody there?' I cried.

'One moment; I haven't had time to see,' Williams replied; and then began to search the opposite end. 'Come out of that, you rascal!' he at length indignantly shouted. 'I've got him sergeant; he's stowed in a corner!'

I then heard the fellow hiss out: 'I've got a knife, and if you come near me, I'll cut your throat, if I have to swing for it!'

Fearful of exposing my comrade to the peril of a hand-to-hand tussle with such a ruffian in the circumscribed area of the attic, I called Williams to the trap-door, and placing a cartridge in my Snider, I handed it to him. Then mounting the table, I thrust my head through the trap and held the candle. My blood was now up, and I determined to order the rascal to be shot if he refused to obey my commands.

'Surrender, in the Queen's name!' I shouted.

There was no response; but the click of the lock of Williams's rifle as he placed the hammer at full cock, must have been distinctly audible to the runaway.

'If you don't come out before I count five, you are a dead man.—One—two—three!'

'Stop! For mercy's sake, give me a chance!' now pleaded the wretch in a husky whisper.

'First throw your knife this way, and then come out.'

The villain tossed his knife to Williams, who threw it behind him to the other extremity of the attic; then leaving his retreat, he crawled towards us, and I was surprised to see by the dim light of the candle that he was attired in plain clothes. When he got near us, we were astonished beyond measure to find that he was not the man of whom we had been in search, but Scales's companion the deserter, who had been suspected of rifling the officer's room!

'I own I took the things,' confessed the man doggedly, seemingly anxious to make a clean breast of it; 'but Scales helped me, and old Nathan put us both on the job!'

'Scales has been here,' I interrupted. 'You may as well tell me what you know about him; it will be the better for you.'

'Yes,' replied the deserter, when he had dropped through the trap on the floor; 'I got off his handcuffs, and here they are;' scattering a heap of bones and displaying the 'bracelets,' each receptacle for the wrists being filed in two.

'Now,' I continued, 'if you can give me any information that will enable me to catch Scales, I'll report in your favour at headquarters. Perhaps it will save you something when you are tried.—Where is he now?'

'Well, sergeant, Nathan gave him a suit of "plains," and he went out. I don't know where he has gone. But I don't mind "rounding" on him, and I'll tell you this: he's to be back here to-night at twelve. Nathan's to let him in by the little window that looks into the yard.'

We then descended the stair with our prisoner; and the man perceiving the Jew, broke away from us, exclaiming: 'You old villain! if it hadn't been for you, I wouldn't have got into this!' and before we could prevent him, struck the miserable Israelite a terrible blow. This act of castigation, under the circumstances, however, rather pleased me than otherwise.

Two additional policemen having been summoned, the deserter and Nathan were taken away in custody. When they had gone, I was rather amused when Williams informed me that, despite the Jew's extreme trepidation, while I

was examining his upper storey, his commercial proclivities did not for a moment desert him, as he attempted to open negotiations with the private regarding the purchase of his war medals.

Two detectives now arrived to search the premises; but of course this investigation did not lie within my province. No article of a criminating nature was found, however, except Scales's uniform, which was concealed beneath the Jew's filthy mattress. I lost no time in despatching my companion to an adjacent blacksmith's shop, in order to have the divided parts of the handcuffs welded together; and this operation was completed within an hour.

It was now dark; the Jew's house had been locked up by the police; so my companion and I turned into the back yard, in order to await the expected return of Scales. We first made sure that he was not concealed about the dilapidated outhouses, which consisted of a disused coal-cellar and shed. In the latter place we set a couple of boxes, and seating ourselves upon them, with our loaded rifles within reach, patiently awaited the return of the runaway—prepared, if need be, to give him a very warm reception. As the night wore on, the sky became clouded, while the oppressive heat was apparently the precursor of a thunderstorm. Suddenly, we were startled by a loud clap, followed almost immediately by a blinding flash of lightning, which, as we could see from our place of vantage, vividly lighted up the towering chalk cliffs that overhung the town. Then rain began to fall in torrents, and the decayed roof of the shed proving most indifferent shelter, we were compelled to put on our greatcoats. To add to our misery, the floor became a regular pool, occasioned by the overflow of a huge water-butt.

After a while the storm ceased as suddenly as it had begun; and being perfectly overpowered with fatigue and the day's excitement, I fell fast asleep, and slumbered until Williams shook me up and informed me that the town clocks had struck twelve. Being stiff and chilled with the drenching I had received, I got on my feet and took a turn about the shed, keeping at the same time a wary eye on the wall, every minute expecting to see the form of the fugitive in the act of scaling it. The monotony of our vigil was now a little relieved by the appearance of the Jew's cat, a large brindled animal, which came purring and rubbing against us. Williams took Puss in his arms and caressed her for some time; and when he got tired of this amusement, he stepped over to the water-butt and, acting on a sudden mischievous impulse, tossed the animal inside. To our surprise, a howl of pain proceeded from the interior of the cask; and upon investigation there stood our prisoner up to the neck in water! Williams had thrown the frightened cat with outstretched claws plump on his face. The poor wretch was stiff and numb with cramp, and was perfectly unable to get out of the butt. We then, with a heavy plank, stove it in near the bottom, and when it was empty, assisted Scales to the shed, where I made him at once strip off his wet clothes—with which Nathan had provided him—and assume his uniform. When the shivering wretch was able to speak, he informed us, that having returned



sooner than arranged, and perceiving the arrest of the Jew and the deserter, he was so overcome with fright, that he took refuge in the water-butt, as no other place of concealment was available. At dusk, he was thinking of getting out of his uncomfortable hiding-place, when he was deterred by seeing us take up a position in the yard. He had, he asserted, been nearly drowned by the volumes of water that poured on his head during the thunderstorm, and confessed to having been terribly scared by the lightning—a circumstance, considering his situation, perhaps not to be wondered at. Also, he admitted, he had actually been concealed in an empty barrel on the drayman's cart, and that the driver had further facilitated his escape by arranging with a fellow-wagoner to have him transferred to his vehicle and driven to the alley in which the Jew's shop was situated.

In consideration of the trouble Scales had given us, I had but little sympathy with his sufferings, and put slender faith in his profuse promises to go with us quietly. Having replaced on his wrists the repaired handcuffs, of which the previous day he had managed to get relieved so speedily, I decided also, by way of making assurance doubly sure, to strap his arm to that of Williams.

We then set out in the direction of our destination; but Scales, even supposing he intended mischief, was too much played out to give any further trouble. At last, to my intense relief, we reached the prison at daybreak, and I handed Mr Scales over to the custody of a warder.

My comrade and I, after partaking of much-needed refreshment kindly offered us by one of the prison officials, returned to headquarters, where I lost no time in reporting the whole circumstances of the case to the adjutant.

That officer ordered the private and myself to appear before the commanding officer, a command which at 'orderly hour' we obeyed. The colonel administered to us—to speak paradoxically—a commendatory reprimand, alternately animadverting on the enormity of our offence in allowing the man to escape, and praising the qualities of courage and perseverance we had displayed in tracking and capturing him, together with the missing thief—'Conduct,' as the commanding officer was pleased to put it, 'which is creditable to the British army in general, and the —th Regiment in particular.'

The Jew was committed for trial on a charge of receiving stolen property; but a day or two before the assizes, he committed suicide by strangling himself in his cell.

The deserter was handed over to the civil authorities, and received a long term of imprisonment: and a similar fate awaited Scales when his term in the military prison had expired. The case of the latter individual was further considered by the general, who cancelled his remission of Scales's discharge with ignominy, so that Her Majesty's —th Regiment of foot was happily enabled to get rid of a knave.

I may now relate my final experience with regard to the foregoing adventure. The sergeant of the barrack-guard reported the roughly repaired handcuffs to the orderly officer, who mentioned the matter in the return he sent to the orderly-room. The case was then remitted

to the quartermaster, who had the handcuffs examined by the armourer; and that functionary having reported them unfit for service, I was mulcted in the sum required for a new pair. I paid the charge without grumbling, as, everything considered, I was heartily glad to get off so cheap.

## MONEY LENT!

YOUNG Sixty per Cent. flourishes in the off-streets of the Haymarket and Regent Street. From his babyhood, money has been the chief joy of his existence; his infant rattle jingled with silver coins, and at school he amassed a small fortune by lending shillings at frightfully usurious rates till 'after the holidays.' His chief study was arithmetic, and the supreme moment of his early life was when his father playfully gave him the complicated account of an earl of racing and theatrical tastes to make out, and he succeeded beyond all expectation, making such a beautifully innocent mistake of forty or fifty pounds on the side of the firm, that it was felt that such talent should no longer be wasted at the academy of Dr Birchington. He became a regular attendant at 'the office,' and at the age of twenty, knew as well as any one with twice his years the worth of any given name on stamped paper. He succeeded to the general control of the business, being assisted in the ornamental duties of the position by an elder brother, who had gone to the bad through the usual channels, but had always plenty of gossip and good stories for 'clients.'

The office is a plain room, without picture or ornament, but covered with a rich soft carpet, and 'upholstered' in the very best taste. The desk is a very solid piece of mahogany, with different keys for every drawer, and with numerous secret recesses. Should the straits of fortune at any time drive you to seek the assistance of Sixty per Cent., it is into this room you will be ushered by the long-legged boy in the anteroom, who appears to divide his time between cracking nuts and casting up the figures in a disused ledger; but he has other uses, and if anybody should be foolish enough to cut up 'rumbustical' with the usurer, the youth has his orders. You will find Sixty per Cent. clean, well attired, and agreeable, seated at the desk; and your business proving satisfactory, you will be turned over to 'my brother,' who will regale you with some spicy anecdotes, an excellent glass of sherry, and a cigar, and such gossip of the town as may seem to be to your taste.

Meantime, the boy has been despatched to Berners Street to obtain information from certain lists in the possession of that mysterious body known as the T. P. S., which are open to the privileged in that thoroughfare; and Sixty per Cent. occupies himself with consulting the rack of books on his desk, containing Burke, Debreit, the Army List, the University Calendars, the Clergy List, &c., according to what may be your requirements; and when the boy has returned with satisfactory accounts of yourself or your securities, your signature on some neatly written

slips of blue paper produces the cheque that relieves your necessities. 'Not half a bad fellow,' you tell your friends; and you are convinced he is the victim of prejudice. But woe betide you, should the time ever come when, the end of your tether reached, you plead delay or ask abatement of your bond! There is no mercy in that hawk face, pleasantly though it can smile; and the soft, well-kept hands can strike like a hawk's talons when the occasion arises. There are times—usually early, before the ordinary hours of business—when Sixty per Cent. may be found in conversation at his office with a shady-looking individual who has 'minion of the law' stamped legibly on his countenance; and the tone in which the usurer utters such sentences as 'Broke at Doncaster last week'—'The writs are out already'—'Sell him up, stock, lock, and barrel'—'Going to bolt, I believe'—'Hang his wife and family!' &c., is rather different from the suave accents in which he usually addresses his clients.

He is fond of music, and is a pretty regular frequenter of the opera on Saturday nights during the season; and in the lobby, often manages to combine a little business with his pleasure, especially in the Epsom, Ascot, and Newmarket July weeks, when backers have had what is termed a facer. He sports a smart mail phaeton with a pair of high stepping bays; and as he drives round the park of an afternoon, he can impart a pretty considerable amount of information to any friend who happens to be with him regarding the occupants of the drags and victorias that they meet. He has his 'bad times,' like everybody else, and when, as occasionally happens, he has an enforced interview with one of Her Majesty's judges, he is obliged to listen to some remarkably plain speaking in respect of his little transactions; and should a vaulting ambition induce him to seek membership in any more respectable club than the third-rate 'proprietary pothouse,' his *amour propre* is liable to be considerably wounded by the extent of the 'pilling' he is subjected to. As a rule, however, he is early taught to 'keep his place,' and 'recreates' himself with gambling in stocks, buying old china, or breeding poultry; jingles the sovereigns in his pocket, and snaps his fingers at the world and its opinion.

#### PROFESSOR SHELDON ON BUTTERINE.

Professor Sheldon, who delivered an exhaustive paper on the 'Butterine Question' at a meeting of the Farmers' Alliance, said that the quantity of butterine produced in Great Britain was not known, but was understood to be considerable; nor was the volume of imported butterine known before the beginning of 1885, because, up to the end of 1884, it was entered in the Board of Trade Returns under the heading of 'butter.' The weight of butterine imported in the four months ending April 1885 was 308,548 cwt., and in the corresponding months of the current year the volume of it had risen to 324,275 cwt. The quantity of butterine imported, at the rate of the past four months, amounts to one hundred and thirty tons a day, day in and day out, Sunday and Monday alike, or getting on towards fifty thousand tons a year; and this

over and above what is produced in the United Kingdom. The effect of the enormous trade on the dairy-farming of this country may be easily imagined, and foreign dairy-farmers are also feeling the competition quite as keenly. The Professor admitted that butterine, when made in a proper way and from good materials, is a wholesome and useful article of food. He considered it beyond dispute that butter would have been outside the reach of a vast number of poor people, had not butterine come in as a substitute and lowered the price. He admitted that well-made butterine is a very tolerable substitute, though it is not butter in another form, as some would have us believe. The utilisation of surplus fat in the form of butterine was about the best possible way in which it could be used at all as an article of food and in a systematic manner. The clause relating to the penalties to be imposed upon retailers who sold butterine as butter, in the Butter Substitutes Bill before parliament, he considered the most important clause in the bill, as it concerned the men who had hitherto been the chief offenders.

#### YOUTH AND AGE.

##### YOUTH.

WHEN I am old, these hills that bound  
My life within their narrow round,  
Will be the threshold of the door  
That leads to Freedom and to Fame,  
And the wide world beyond no more  
An idle dream, an empty name;  
But I, from cares and troubles free,  
Its glories and its joys shall see.

The summer isles of southern seas;  
Great battles, glorious victories;  
The boundless prairies of the West,  
Where red men hunt the buffalo;  
Whatever fairest gifts and best  
The gods have given to men below—  
These, heart of mine, these shall we see  
In the brave days that are to be.

##### AGE.

When I was young, this narrow round  
Of hills a glorious world did bound;  
Here, on the quiet valley floor,  
I dreamed of Freedom and of Fame,  
Ere yet I learned they were no more  
Than a vain dream, an empty name;  
In that glad careless long ago,  
The happy hours seemed all too slow.

I have been wrecked in stormy seas;  
Not mine life's glorious victories;  
Gone the bright spell on boyhood cast;  
No more along the primrose way  
I wander, for my paths have passed  
To this sad world of everyday.  
Ah, heart of mine, no more we know  
The days and dreams of long ago!

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